Benefits of Submitting a Spokane River Case Study to OECD's Chemicals Committee Meeting

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is an intergovernmental economic organization with 36 member countries, founded in 1961 to stimulate economic progress and world trade. The OECD Chemicals Committee and the Working Party on Resource Productivity and Waste are co-sponsoring a project to examine case studies of public policy mis-alignment at the chemical/waste interface. The case studies will foster a discussion on real-world policy mis-alignment to identify potential, or applied, solutions. The case studies will cover different sectors/issues (e.g. restricted chemicals in materials (plastics) that impede recycling or other end of life treatment; need for secondary materials to align with chemical safety policies; issues with chemicals released in waste water from use of recycled raw materials; etc.).

The case studies will be discussed at a workshop in conjunction with the 60th Joint Meeting of the Chemicals Committee and the Working Party on Chemicals, Pesticides and Biotechnology (Joint Meeting) in early February 2020. Doug Krapas of IEP and Dr. Lauren Heine of Northwest Green Chemistry submitted the Spokane River case study via the OECD secretariat. The case study was accepted for inclusion in the February meeting. Doug and Lauren are seeking formal support of the OECD case study from the Task Force. There are several benefits to the ongoing work of SRRTTF that will come from participation in the OECD case study discussion:

1. The February meeting is a forum to hear from other countries if they have also encountered this same issue. Other countries may have avoided policy misalignments due to their practices (policy, engineering, regulatory, pigment procurement, exemptions etc.) or identification of alternatives. If so, these will result in ideas for regulatory, green chemistry and engineering, and/or policy solutions in Spokane.
2. The Spokane River case study will increase global awareness of inadvertent PCBs in pigments and how that may impact recycling. Others may be unaware than even very low levels of some pollutants can be problematic.
3. A summary document of the expert workshop discussion, along with all the case studies, will be published. This document will serve as intellectual capital available to the Task Force.
4. Outcomes from the expert discussion can be applied to realigning pollution prevention measures with circular economy goals.
5. The case study and discussion will further the groundwork laid during the recent iPCBs in pigments and inks workshop and ongoing working groups to address regulatory, policy, and technical considerations.

These outcomes directly contribute to SRRTTF goals to:

1. Prepare recommendations for controlling and reducing the sources of listed toxics in the Spokane River.
2. Review proposed Toxic Management Plans, Source Management Plans, BMPs, and data to be used to develop performance-based limits.
3. Address Comprehensive Plan objectives related to green chemistry, control actions, and compliance with PCB regulations.